

HOW TO... Back up your hard disk

David McKinnon shows you how to safeguard your PC and all its data by creating a backup partition using the software on this month's cover disc

PARAGON HARD DISK MANAGER 8.5



Your hard disk is a repository for all your files, but you can make better use of your PC's available space by creating a partition. This is easy to do using Paragon Hard Disk Manager 8.5, the full version of which is on this month's cover disc.

A partition is a logical section of the physical hard disk inside your computer that your operating system addresses. Typically, your hard disk has a single partition covering the whole disk, which Windows recognises as drive C:. This contains all the photos, documents and music files that you have saved on your computer, as well as the Windows operating system and all the data that is required to run your applications.

Creating a backup of this information would usually require you to manually copy the important data to a separate storage medium – such as a DVD or external hard disk – or use a dedicated backup program to do the same. Either way, you have to remember to do it and have the backup media to hand. Using Paragon Hard Disk Manager, you can instead create a special partition on your hard disk to safely store a compressed image of your hard disk. This is secure and, because it is independent of the Windows file system, it is also immune to many of the problems that can afflict your operating system.

1 Launch Paragon Hard Disk Manager. The main window gives you an overview of your hard disks and partitions, including their file system and available space. Bear in mind that the space required to back up your main

partition (usually your C: drive) is about half the size of the data on that partition. In the left-hand panel, select Manage Backup Capsule. This launches a wizard to guide you through the process of creating a dedicated backup partition.

2 Click Next when the dialog box appears. Advanced Mode allows you more freedom to position your backup capsule partition, but the default available locations should be sufficient for most users.

3 Next, you'll be presented with a map of your current hard disk configuration. This shows both the physical disks you have installed and their current partitions. A shaded red rectangle indicates the position of the backup capsule. This can be moved either by dragging between positions on a physical drive or selecting another hard disk.

In some cases, particularly if you have several partitions on your disk, you may want to move the backup partition location. If so, just click the Back button and select Advanced Mode. Be aware, however, that in Advanced Mode the wizard will not help with any boot problems. Once you are satisfied with the location of the backup capsule, click Next.

4 Using the slide at the bottom of the box, select the size of your backup capsule. As you move the slide, the map of your disk alters to reflect the changes to your hard disk. The partition will be created using free space available from the preceding partition. If this is your primary partition, remember that Windows

requires a little breathing space to run efficiently. Ideally, your backup partition should be a little larger than the backup file. You can find out how big this is likely to be by running the backup wizard and selecting the drive that you wish to back up.

If you haven't got enough space to back up your entire system, it may be worth dividing your primary partition into three: one for Windows, one for your data and one for applications. This is easily achieved using Hard Disk Manager, and allows you to focus your backup routines on Windows. Click Next.

5 If you want to have the option to boot your computer directly into the recovery application, check the box on the next screen. Otherwise, leave it blank. If you don't choose this option you should create a recovery CD, which will allow you to find and deploy your backup partition if Windows fails completely.

Click Next again and then Finish to confirm the changes you've made. Hard Disk Manager doesn't make any changes at this stage. If you're satisfied with the changes described in the main Disk View window, click Apply in the toolbar. Otherwise, click Discard.

6 A dialog box will open showing the progress of your new backup partition. Once complete, you will see the backup partition in the main disk view. You can now create a backup of your primary hard disk to the new partition using the backup wizard. Don't forget to create a recovery CD if you've chosen not to boot to the recovery system. **CS**

